

Welcome to the February 2015 ACS Newsletter!


Please share the contents of this newsletter with your American friends and colleagues. In order to receive this free newsletter, please enroll your stay in Romania with the U.S. State Department's free Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (**STEP**) at <https://step.state.gov/step/>

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 Send all email inquiries to Bucharest, American Citizen Services
ACSBucharest@state.gov

 Join us on **Facebook** - [American Citizen Services Romania](#)

1. HAPPY VALENTINE!

Six Signs Your Online Sweetie Might Be an Overseas Scammer

The Department of State Bureau of Consular Affairs receives daily calls about international scams involving Internet dating. Many scams are initiated through the Internet; victims range in age from teens to the elderly and come from all socio-economic backgrounds.

- **Here are 6 signs your lover might be a scammer. Full article here:** <http://www.buzzfeed.com/travelgov/6-signs-your-online-sweetie-might-be-an-overseas-s-1bebs>

Millions of U.S. citizens use dating sites, social networking sites, and chat rooms to meet people. And many begin successful relationships.

Scammers also use these sites to meet potential victims. They create fake profiles to build online relationships and eventually convince people to send money in the name of love. An online love interest who asks for money is almost certainly a scam artist.

Report fraud to econsumer.ftccomplaintassistant.gov

Find contact info for embassies and consulates at <http://www.usembassy.gov/> or travel.state.gov.

For more travel safety information and advice, follow [@TravelGov](https://twitter.com/TravelGov), like [Facebook.com/travelgov](https://www.facebook.com/travelgov), or check out travel.state.gov.

- **Join a Google+ Hangout on Travel, Love, and Visas**

What happens if you fall in love abroad and you want to bring your foreign spouse or fiancé (e) to the United States? With Valentine's Day right around the corner, you won't want to miss this discussion. Join the U.S. Department of State on Friday, February 13 at 1:00 p.m. (EST) for a [Google+ Hangout](#) on travel, love, and visas.

We'll talk with a newlywed about her experience with the process, a fiancé (e) visa expert from the Bureau of Consular Affairs, and a UK-based immigration attorney who helps couples navigate the fiancé(s) visa process.

Submit your questions [here](#) now, watch the Hangout on Friday [here](#), and follow the conversation online by using [#TravelGovLove](#).

For more information:

- [U.S. Department of State: Visa Information](#)
- [Internet Dating and Romance Scams](#)



2. Taxes - Internal Revenue Service (IRS) tips and tools for U.S. Citizens and Resident Aliens Abroad

More information at <http://romania.usembassy.gov/acs/taxes.html>

Who Must File?

U.S. citizens must report their worldwide income on their federal income tax returns. Living or earning income outside the United States does not relieve a U.S. citizen of the responsibility for filing tax returns. However, U.S. citizens living and/or working abroad may be entitled to various deductions, exclusions, and credits. ACS provides a list of unvetted U.S. tax practitioners and a limited supply of federal tax forms.

When is the 2014 Federal Tax Return Due?

Due date for **Form 1040: April 15, 2015** If you are a U.S. citizen or resident alien, the rules for filing income, estate, and gift tax returns and paying estimated tax are generally the same whether you are in the United States or abroad. Your worldwide income is subject to U.S. income tax, regardless of where you reside.

Extensions:

- An automatic extension to June 15, 2015, is granted for taxpayers living outside the United States and Puerto Rico. No form is required; write "Taxpayer Resident Abroad" at the top of your tax return.

- **Caution:** This extension applies only for filing your tax return, not for payment. If you owe any taxes, you're required to pay by April 15, 2015. Interest and penalties will generally be applied if payment is made after this date.
- To request an additional extension to October 15, 2015, use Form 4868.
 - **Caution:** This extension applies only for filing your tax return, not for payment. If you owe any taxes, you're required to pay by April 15, 2015. Interest and penalties will generally be applied if payment make after this date.
- **Other extensions** may be available on IRS.gov.

Can I Mail My Return and Payment?

If you mail a return from outside the United States, the date of filing is the postmark date. However, if you mail a payment, separately or with your return, your payment is not considered received until the date of actual receipt.

The closest IRS office that has jurisdiction over Americans in Romania is located in Frankfurt, Germany. The IRS office in Frankfurt will accept tax returns, tax payments, W-7 applications, and taxpayer correspondence. The mailing address is:

U.S. Consulate General Frankfurt

Internal Revenue Service
 Giessener Str. 30
 60435 Frankfurt/Main
 Tel: 49 69 7535-3834 or 3823
 Fax: 49 69 7535-3803
 Email: IRS.Frankfurt@irs.gov

All papers sent to IRS Frankfurt will be routed to the proper office in the United States via regular mail. For faster processing, please directly mail your documents to the proper office in the U.S.

*If you are a U.S. citizen or resident alien (Green Card Holder), and you live in a foreign country or you are a nonresident alien, mail your **U.S. tax returns** to:*

Department of the Treasury

Internal Revenue Service Center
Austin, TX 73301-0215 USA

*Estimated **tax payments** should be mailed with form 1040-ES to:*

Internal Revenue Service

P.O. Box 1300
Charlotte, NC 28201-1300 USA

For your convenience, we list the links to **states' tax web sites** below where you can obtain state tax forms.

[Alabama](#) | [Alaska](#) | [Arizona](#) | [Arkansas](#) | [California](#) | [Colorado](#) | [Connecticut](#) | [Delaware](#) | [District of Columbia](#) | [Florida](#) | [Georgia](#) | [Hawaii](#) | [Idaho](#) | [Illinois](#) | [Indiana](#) | [Iowa](#) | [Kansas](#) | [Kentucky](#) | [Louisiana](#) | [Maine](#) | [Maryland](#) | [Massachusetts](#) | [Michigan](#) | [Minnesota](#) | [Mississippi](#) | [Missouri](#) | [Montana](#) | [Nebraska](#) | [Nevada](#) | [New Hampshire](#) | [New Jersey](#) | [New Mexico](#) | [New York](#) | [North Carolina](#) | [North Dakota](#) | [Ohio](#) | [Oklahoma](#) | [Oregon](#) | [Pennsylvania](#) | [Puerto Rico](#) | [Rhode Island](#) | [South Carolina](#) | [South Dakota](#) | [Tennessee](#) | [Texas](#) | [Utah](#) | [Vermont](#) | [Virginia](#) | [Washington](#) | [West Virginia](#) | [Wisconsin](#) | [Wyoming](#)

Can I Electronically File My Return?

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) advises that U.S. citizens and resident aliens living outside the United States can use [IRS Free File](#) to prepare and file their federal tax returns electronically (Use [Free File](#) if your adjusted gross income is \$60,000 or less.).

[E-File options](#) are listed on IRS.gov.

What Forms May I Need?

- [1040, U.S Individual Income Tax Return](#)
 - [Instructions to Form 1040](#)
 - [1116, Foreign Tax Credit](#)
 - [2013 Instructions to Form 1116](#) – 2014 instructions will be available soon, please check on www.irs.gov
- [2350, Application for Extension of Time to File U.S. Income Tax Return \(for U.S. citizens and residents abroad\)](#)
- [2555, Foreign Earned Income Exclusion](#)
 - [Instructions to Form 2555](#)
- [2555-EZ, Foreign Earned Income Exclusion](#)
 - [Instructions to Form 2555-EZ](#)
- [4868, Application for Automatic Extension of Time To File U.S. Individual Income Tax Return](#)

- [8802, Application for United States Residency Certificate](#)
 - [Instructions to Form 8802](#)
- [8938, Statement of Specified Foreign Financial Assets](#),
 - [Instructions to Form 8938](#)
- [14653, Certification by U.S. Person Residing Outside of the United States for Streamlined Foreign Offshore Procedures](#)

How Do I Pay My Taxes?

You must pay your taxes in U.S. dollars.

- **[Direct pay.](#)** You can pay online with a direct transfer from your U.S. bank account using [Direct Pay](#), the [Electronic Federal Tax Payment System](#), or by a U.S. debit or credit card. You can also pay by phone using the Electronic Federal Tax Payment System or by a U.S. debit or credit card.
- **[Foreign wire transfers.](#)** If you have a U.S. bank account, you can use the [Electronic Federal Tax Payment System](#). If you do not have a U.S. bank account, ask whether your financial institution has a U.S. affiliate that can help you make same-day wire transfers.
- **[Foreign electronic payments.](#)** International taxpayers who do not have a U.S. bank account may transfer funds from their foreign bank account directly to the IRS for payment of their tax liabilities.

Other Reporting?

You also may have to file FinCEN Form 114, Report of Foreign Bank and Financial Accounts ([FBAR](#)), by June 30, 2015.

Where Can I Get Help?

Contact the **International Taxpayer Service Call Center** by phone or fax. The International Call Center is open Monday through Friday, from 6:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. (Eastern Time).

Tel: 267-941-1000 (not toll-free)

Fax: 267-941-1055

You may also contact the IRS office in London, Paris, or Frankfurt. For addresses and telephone numbers, contact [my local office internationally](#).

I Received a Notice from the IRS – What Do I Do?

If you receive a notice from the IRS and need to contact the IRS, call the number listed on the notice or the International Taxpayer Service Call Center (see above).

Where Can I Get More Information?

- For information on the IRS website about international taxpayers, [see this page](#).
- For general information about international taxpayers, see [Publication 54](#), "Taxation of U.S. Citizens and Residents Abroad."
- For information on the Affordable Care Act and taxpayers outside the United States, see [Publication 5187](#), "Health Care Law."

I Haven't Filed All My Tax Returns – What Can I Do?

If you have not filed all the returns required of you and want to catch up on your filing obligations, see this announcement: [IRS makes changes to offshore-programs](#).

Useful links:

- [U.S. Federal Income Tax](#) -Tax Information for U.S. Citizens Residing Abroad.
- [How to file from abroad](#) - Tax Guide for U.S. Citizens and Resident Aliens Abroad.
- [Forms and Publications](#)
- **Tax forms** can be downloaded from the Internet at <http://www.irs.gov/formspubs/index.html> , ordered online, obtained through American Citizen Services at your local Embassy or Consulate, or by calling the IRS at 001 800 829 3676.

Consumer Alerts

Please note that the IRS does not initiate contact with taxpayers by email to request personal or financial information. This includes any type of electronic communication, such as text messages and social media channels.

- If you get an unsolicited email that appears to be from the IRS, please report it by sending it to phishing@irs.gov.

- If you find a suspicious website that claims to be the IRS, please send the site's URL by email to phishing@irs.gov, using the subject line: suspicious website.

For more information on phishing scams, please see [Suspicious e-Mails and Identity Theft](#).

Tax Accountants and Consultants

As a convenience, we are providing information for the tax assistance organizations that we are aware of that handles US taxes. Our purpose is simply to offer you a resource to assist you with your tax needs. The U.S. Embassy does not recommend or endorse individual preparers or firms, and assumes no responsibility for the professional ability or integrity of the firm or its employees. [Download the Tax Accountants and Consultants List](#).

3. Becoming a Foreign Service Officer

Explore a career in the Foreign Service and start your journey with the Department today.

The mission of a U.S. diplomat in the Foreign Service is to promote peace, support prosperity, and protect American citizens while advancing the interests of the U.S. abroad.

If you're passionate about public service and want to represent the U.S. around the world, a challenging and rewarding career is waiting for you. The opportunity to work and experience cultures, customs and people of different nations is truly a career unlike any other.

The work you'll do will have an impact on the world. You will be asked to serve at one of any of the more than 270 embassies, consulates and other diplomatic missions in The Americas, Africa, Europe and Eurasia, East Asia and Pacific, Middle East and North Africa, and South Asia. Some of these posts are in difficult and even dangerous environments, but working in them affords great challenges and rewards.

Explore a career in the Foreign Service and start your journey with the Department today. Start by looking at [where we work](#), or taking the quiz to [find out if the Foreign Service is right for you](#), or [what career track is the best fit](#).

- **FSO Selection Process at** [Steps to becoming a Foreign Service Officer](#)

When can I take the test? The Foreign Service Officer Test (FSOT) is administered three times per year, generally in February, June, and October, each time for a period or “window” of eight days. More at <http://careers.state.gov/work/foreign-service/officer/test-process>

4. Earthquake and Disaster Preparedness

More information at http://romania.usembassy.gov/acs/disaster_preparedness.html

The following information focuses on earthquakes because seismic activity poses a significant risk for Romania. However, Romania is at risk for other natural and manmade hazards. While much of the information below specifically addresses earthquakes, it is applicable to multiple hazards, and we encourage you to think broadly about the possible risks you and your family may face and to be prepared for any kind of emergency that may arise.

Romania is situated in a seismically active region and has a history of devastating and deadly earthquakes. The Bucharest area has experienced a number of tremors of varying intensities, and the probability that a severe and damaging earthquake will occur is high. The consequences of such a disaster will vary greatly depending upon the circumstances surrounding the quake, and no one can predict with any certainty what conditions will exist immediately following an intensive shock.

The Role of the Embassy

The Romanian Government is responsible for assisting foreigners in the event of a disaster, but authorities may be stretched beyond their capacity to respond in the immediate aftermath of a major earthquake. Telephone services will be severely overloaded, if they are functioning at all, and the Romanian Government will likely restrict phone use to priority users. Nonetheless, the Embassy will quickly want to ascertain the welfare and whereabouts of American citizens.

To aid in this process, American citizens should cooperate with Romanian authorities at evacuation sites and clearly identify themselves as Americans. Those connected with larger organizations such as companies, schools, or church groups should try to let these organizations know of their welfare and

whereabouts if this is practical. If possible, American citizens should try to contact their American Citizen Services wardens and/or the Embassy. The Embassy will be in touch with the Romanian Government and with larger umbrella organizations to attempt to identify as many American citizens as possible and determine their welfare. In the likely event that it is impossible to communicate by telephone or use motor vehicles, Embassy consular assistance teams may be deployed to major evacuation sites, international schools, hotels etc. to collect information from and about American citizens.

The Embassy will help provide information about the situation and communicate with Romanian government officials, if necessary, in order to obtain proper food, shelter and medical attention. However, a significant earthquake will likely overwhelm the Romanian government's resources and individuals should be prepared to provide for their own emergency needs. We will pass as much information as possible about the welfare of individual U.S. citizens back to the Department of State in Washington, D.C. so that this information may be shared with families, friends and employers.

The Role of the Romanian Government

The Romanian Civil Protection Command is part of the Romanian Defense System and is responsible for protecting the population, assets, national heritage and geographical environment in case of a natural disaster. The command's activities include disaster intervention, search & rescue, warning and notification, sheltering, evacuation, etc. A central committee for evacuations is set up under authority of the Government if evacuation is required. In the event of a disaster, the location of the centers is determined depending on the area affected and the type of disaster that occurred. The Civil Protection Command coordinates with the local authorities in order to notify the population regarding evacuation or taking shelter.

Evacuations

Evacuations will likely occur after an earthquake. City authorities will issue evacuation advice. Americans, as well as others affected by the disaster, may seek assistance from the Romanian authorities, but you should be prepared to take care of your own emergency needs for the first several days of any disaster.

Emergency Supply Kit

Essential Supplies (Store enough for three-five days)

- Water (four liters or one gallon per person per day. Change water every three to five months)
 - Food (canned or pre-cooked, requiring no heat or water. Consider special dietary needs for infants, the elderly, pets, etc.). Can opener.
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- Flashlight with spare batteries and bulbs
 - Radio (battery operated with spare batteries)
 - Large plastic trash bags (for trash, waste, water protection, ground cloth, temporary blanket)
 - Hand soap and/or disinfecting hand cleaner gel that does not require water
 - Feminine hygiene supplies, infant supplies, toilet paper
 - Essential medications as required; glasses if you normally wear contacts
 - Paper plates, cups, plastic utensils, cooking foil and plastic wrap and paper towels
 - First Aid kit with instructions
 - Lei, euros, and/or dollars in small bills (ATMs may not work after a disaster), with coins and phone cards for public phones; credit cards.
 - Sturdy, closed-toed shoes and work gloves; place emergency supplies in a sturdy tub where you can quickly and easily access your kit.
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Earthquakes, hurricanes, and tsunamis are only some of the natural disasters threatening the safety of U.S. citizens abroad. When natural disasters occur abroad, the Department of State and U.S. embassies and consulates in the affected country stand ready around the clock to locate and assist U.S. citizens in need.

Did You Know?

Doorways are no stronger than any other part of a structure so don't rely on them for protection! During an earthquake, get under a sturdy piece of furniture and hold on. It will help shelter you from falling objects that could injure you during an earthquake.

[Get Help in an Emergency](#)

Emergency contacts and assistance for U.S. Citizens.



5. American and Romanian 2015 Holidays and ACS Office Closures

The Embassy and the Consulate are closed on the following American and Romanian holidays.

2015

Date	Day	Holiday	Type
Jan. 1	Thursday	New Year's Day	American / Romanian
Jan. 2	Friday	Day After New Year's Day	Romanian
Jan. 19	Monday	Birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr.	American
Feb. 16	Monday	Washington's Birthday	American
Apr. 13	Monday	Orthodox Easter Monday	Romanian
May 1	Friday	Romanian Labor Day	Romanian
May 25	Monday	Memorial Day	American
Jun. 1	Monday	Pentecost Monday	Romanian
Jul. 3	Friday	Independence Day (observed)	American
Sep. 7	Monday	Labor Day	American
Oct. 12	Monday	Columbus Day	American
Nov. 11	Wednesday	Veterans Day	American
Nov. 26	Thursday	Thanksgiving Day	American
Nov. 30	Monday	St. Andrew's Day	Romanian
Dec. 1	Tuesday	Romanian National Day	Romanian

Dec. 25	Friday	Christmas Day	American/Romanian
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The Embassy and Consulate are closed on public American and Romanian holidays. For a list of public holidays observed by the Embassy, please select [Holidays](#).

For announcements on emergency closings or delayed openings, please make sure to check our [website](#) and/or [Facebook](#) page around the holidays and during severe weather conditions.

6. Consular Services Corner



- Services Fees:**

First-Time passport, first adult (ten-year) passport, or replacement for a lost/stolen/mutilated passport.	U.S. \$135.00 (payments also accepted in RON)
Adult passport renewal fee (renewal of a ten-year passport).	U.S. \$110.00 (payments also accepted in RON)
Children's Passports (under 16 years old).	U.S. \$105.00 (payments also accepted in RON)
Additional Visa Pages	U.S. \$82.00 (payments also accepted in RON)
Passport Cards: Adult First Time Passport Card.	U.S. \$55.00 (payments also accepted in RON)
Adult Passport Card Renewal	U.S. \$30.00 (payments also accepted in RON). Note: Adults who already have a fully valid passport book may apply for the card as a passport renewal.

Children Passport Card	U.S. \$40.00 (payments also accepted in RON).
Children Passport Card (In connection with or addition to a passport book application).	U.S. \$15.00 (payments also accepted in RON).
Reports of Birth Abroad (CRBA)	U.S. \$100.00 (payments also accepted in RON)
Expedited Service	No expedited service is offered outside of the United States.
Notarial Service (first service – seal)	U.S. \$50.00 (payments also accepted in RON).
Notarial Service (each additional seal Same transaction).	U.S. \$50.00 (payments also accepted in RON).
Certified True Copy (first copy)	U.S. \$50.00 (payments also accepted in RON).
Certified True Copy (additional copies)	U.S. \$50.00 (payments also accepted in RON).
<p style="text-align: center;">**Please Note**</p> <p>All fees are established by worldwide cost of service studies. Additionally, all fees in RON are based on current exchange rates and are, therefore, subject to change.</p>	

* More information at [Fees and forms of Payment](#)

- **Mail in your passport application! You can renew your passport via mail**

Want to Save Even More Time? [Mail in your application!](#) You can renew your passport via mail if you meet the following qualifications:

1. You are currently in Romania and have a mailing address in Romania
2. Your most recent full validity passport was issued within the last 15 years **and** when you were age 16 or over
3. The passport you are submitting is not damaged or mutilated

For necessary documentation and more information on mail-in renewals, please [click here](#)

- **Minimize processing time with the following steps:**

Fill out and print your application online. Fill out your [passport application online and print it](#). Failure to fill out and print your passport application online may cause delays in processing your application. Bring the printed copy of your application with you to the Embassy.

Be Prepared. If you do not bring all required information and documentation, you may be required to make a new appointment. Prior to your appointment, please review the requirements for your requested service ([Passport](#), [CRBA](#), or [Notarial Service](#)). See the following links for up to date information on requirements.

- [Passports and Reports of Birth \(CRBA\)](#)
- [Notarial Services](#)

For more information click [here](#)

Important Announcement: All non-emergency services (renewal of U.S. passports, Consular Reports of Birth Abroad, Notarial Services and other services) are provided [by appointment only](#)

Appointments for passport services are available Monday through Friday from 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM and Mondays from 1:30 PM to 3:30 PM.

Please note:

- ✚ The American Citizen Services unit cannot answer inquiries related to visas for Romanian citizens, even if they involve an American citizen petitioner or sponsor. For information regarding visas, please follow this link: <http://romania.usembassy.gov/visas.html>
- ✚ **Security check: All applicants must pass through security**, which includes putting your personal belongings through an x-ray machine and walking through a metal detector. Due to tightened security policies, please do not bring iPods, iPads, PDAs, laptops, portable game devices, portable readers, etc. Cell phones and smart watches must be checked at the entrance. In order to not delay your appointment, we strongly encourage you to bring only what is needed for your business with us.

- **Emergency Resources:**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lost & Stolen Passports • Medical Emergencies • Victims of Crime • Arrest & Detention • Missing Persons & Contacting Loved Ones. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parental Child Abductions • Death Abroad • Natural Disasters • <u>The State Department's Role in a Crisis.</u>
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7. Notice: The ACS Newsletter is Going Virtual!

U.S. Citizens in Romania is the name of the ACS' new Blog.

Starting with the **March 2015** issue, the ACS Newsletter will live online as a **Blog**, making it easier for **YOU** to access the information from anywhere.

The name of our new ACS Blog is **U.S. Citizens in Romania**- A blog to keep Americans living in Romania informed on issues that significantly affect their lives overseas.

The ACS blog will include several tabs containing links to U.S. government websites and official forms, news, security messages; emergency contact information and information regarding services offered by the ACS section to the local American community and archived newsletter issues.

-Notice-



While American Citizen Service (ACS) strive to make the material provided in our newsletter as informative as possible, we make no claims, promises, or guarantees of warranties of any kind, implied, expressed, or statutory, including but not limited to the warranties of non-infringement of third party rights, title, merchantability.

References included in this newsletter to any specific commercial product, process, or service, firm or corporation name is used only for the information and convenience to the American citizen community in Romania, and does not constitute endorsement, recommendations, or favoring by the Department of State or the U.S. Embassy in Romania.

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